2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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659 A Papal Delegate visited Malta and concluded that the differences between the government and the Church could best be settled by means of a concordat. During most of the year following the Papal Delegate's visit, Britain tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a concordat and to get the Holy See to forbid the Maltese clergy to take part in the general elections scheduled for May 1930. The Vatican, however, declared that Strickland was not *persona grata* and that as long as he remained in power, a concordat was not possible.

In Malta, the relations between the Strickland Government and the Church went from bad to worse. In April 1930, two Constitutional Party Ministers gathered many sworn statements that Monsignor Gonzi, the Bishop of Gozo, had instructed priests to preach against the Constitutional Party and to refuse absolution to its supporters. This inquiry greatly angered the Church. On the 666 first of May, the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo issued a joint 659 pastoral which forbade people to vote for Strickland or those can- 648 didates who supported him. In view of the spiritual sanctions that [664] threatened people who voted for the candidates of one of the two [642] major parties, Britain had no option but to cancel the elections. It subsequently suspended the constitution, but kept the Strickland ministers on as advisers.

197 A Royal Commission went to Malta to investigate the trouble. Following its report, Britain restored the constitution and 64 abolished the teaching of Italian in primary schools. In June 1932 665 the Nationalists defeated Strickland and his supporters in a bit- 666 terly contested election in which 96 per cent of the electorate voted. However, their period in office was very brief. The Governor dismissed them in November 1933 for deliberately evading the constitutional provisions regarding language, for they had set about to re-establish the primacy of Italian in the educational system and the civil service. Once again the administration of the islands became the responsibility of the Governor.

186 During the fourteen years of Governor's rule which followed, 64 the deep wounds caused by the long, harsh political conflict slowly healed. The first Italian bombs of the war finally killed the language dispute. The united defence effort and the common suffering caused by the prolonged bombardment further helped to reunite political rivals and suppress parochial quarrels. Britain awarded the people of Malta and Gozo the George Cross for

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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their heroism, and after the war restored representative government.

In the first election under the new constitution, the people voted overwhelmingly for the Labour Party, then led by Dr. Paul Boffa. But in 1949 a disagreement between Dr. Boffa and his Minister of Public Works and Reconstruction, Mr. Dom Mintoff, split the party. The Nationalists, with the support of Dr. Boffa's new Workers' Party, formed the next few governments. Dom Mintoff's Malta Labour Party gradually swallowed the Workers' Party and finally defeated the Nationalists in the 1955 general election.

There was almost constant friction between the Church and the Mintoff Government during the three years it was in office. From the outset, Mintoff showed himself reluctant to submit to the authority of the Church. His refusal to pay the traditional call on the Archbishop, Monsignor Gonzi, when he took office was symbolic of this independence. Many incidents contributed to the disagreement between the two, which grew more intense as both became more outspoken in their criticism of each other. Perhaps the most serious clash occurred over the Archbishop's stand on the Government's proposal to link Malta more closely with Britain. On the eve of a referendum concerning this proposal, Monsignor Gonzi made a broadcast in which he said that he could not support the integration proposal because Mintoff had failed (whether by design or circumstance is an open question) to secure adequate guarantees from Britain to protect the position of the Roman Catholic religion. In spite of this, the electorate supported Mintoff's proposal; but relations between the Labour Party and the Archbishop remained strained.

Then, shortly before he resigned, Mintoff sparked off a sharp dispute with the Church by hanging in the National Museum a painting taken from St. John's Co-Cathedral. Originally, the government had sent the painting, a Caravaggio, to Italy to be restored. But the government seized it when it returned and declared that since the Co-Cathedral was government property, the painting was a national treasure that should be properly cared for and displayed to the public. In the course of the acrimonious dispute which followed, Mintoff, who had appealed the matter to the Vatican, was ordered by the Holy See to return the painting. He finally returned it on the night before he resigned.

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landlords and other important people who influence the affairs of the country live and work in the city or its suburbs. Finally, the greater part of the island's wage-earning population travels to work in this area.

Differences in language, dress and education set many of the villagers apart from their urban compatriots. That this should be so is not surprising, for the inhabitants of the city have been in contact with the country's foreign masters for many centuries. The Maltese upper classes, and those who aspire to be so considered, have studiously imitated the manners, speech and dress of these foreign residents. An English visitor early in the seventeenth century remarked on this contrast between the townsmen, who struck him as being 'altogether frenchified', and the countrymen, whom he described as 'half clad, and indeed a miserable people'.[1]

There is a noticeable difference between the heavy consonants and broad vowels of the uneducated countryman, and the English-accented Maltese of the inhabitants of Sliema, many of whose children speak more English than Maltese. There are also differences in vocabulary and inflection, for the language spoken in Valletta and the towns contains many more Italian and English words and expressions than the village Maltese. In fact, their preference for foreign words has given the inhabitants of Sliema the collective, and slightly derogatory, nickname of *tal-mama*, which derives from their habit of using the Italian word *mamà* (mother) instead of the Maltese *omm*. Village children, however, are now taught a standard Maltese at school, and they are urged to substitute this, *il-Malti bil-pulit*, for their local dialects.

The social and cultural differences between town and country have led to the creation of stereotypes. The typical townsman was often described to me by villagers as a white-collar worker who goes to cocktail parties, tries to look like an Englishman – pipe, tweeds and moustache – and speaks English to his children. The villager, on the other hand, is portrayed as an illiterate rustic who spends his money on wine and fireworks, without a thought for the future of his children. Both caricatures, of course, are gross exaggerations, but each, none the less, contains elements of truth. But many farmers and poor village labourers make great sacrifices in order to give their children an education beyond the elementary level.

[1] George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun A.D. 1610* (London, W. Barnett, 1615), p. 234.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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owns no land or other property in common and its inhabitants are rarely called upon or choose to work for a common end. At the same time, villagers are conscious of belonging to a distinct social entity which is distinguished from other villages by a collective nickname and a common sub-culture.

Many villages have a dialect quite distinct from that of their neighbours, which the inhabitants, even those who have learned to speak 'correctly' (*bil-pulit*), normally use to each other; although they will invariably address strangers in their school Maltese. There are also a number of minor variations of certain customs between villages or districts. These may include the way church bells are rung to announce a death or the way some aspects of the festas are organized. Finally, each village has its own very private body of gossip, stories, scandals and jokes, which makes up a part of its history and tradition that is not shared with outsiders.

As a congregation and a religious corporation, the village *qua* parish owns land and other property, including the parish church. It also has an appointed leader in the parish priest. The inhabitants of the village meet regularly for worship, to take part in religious processions and to carry out other devotional activities. Furthermore, they act together to celebrate the annual festa of the patron saint, who symbolizes the unity of the secular and religious aspects of the village, for he is patron of both village and parish.

A village can also be regarded as a moral community. That is, people who live there must conform to a certain code of conduct. While the community cannot enforce this code with the type of formal sanctions the police and the Church use to punish infractions of secular and religious laws, public opinion can, and does, exert great pressure for conformity. A person who flouts the canons of convention becomes the object of malicious gossip and, depending on the nature of the offence, he may also become the target of overt hostile action and have his house front splashed with paint, or his front door burned. The only way to escape from the sanctions of public opinion is to move to one of the urban areas or the expanding new suburbs, where licence can be relatively anonymous.

Members of a village thus share a common body of custom and tradition; they also display an intense loyalty to their place of birth. This sense of loyalty is strongest during the annual festa of

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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the village, which draws in native sons and daughters from all over the country, and often from as far away as Canada and Australia. This loyalty is also evident at other times. Villagers like to think of themselves as a united body, and they take care to protect the appearance of unity before strangers. This is an attitude of which anyone studying the social history of a village becomes keenly aware. Strangers are thus treated with great reserve. The inhabitants of the smaller villages are well known for their reluctance to give any information about their neighbours to strangers. Inquiring visitors are often referred to the parish priest, who, as village spokesman, screens them and, if possible, deals with their questions. The reserve of a village *vis-à-vis* a stranger is considerably more than just an expression of village loyalty. Present also is the very real fear of vengeance should the answer to a stranger's question lead to some unpleasantness for a neighbour. Social relations in a small village are to a very considerable extent governed by the proverb 'Don't make an enemy of your neighbour' (*Taghmilx ghadu lil ġarek*).

In view of this loyalty, it is not surprising that people express their solidarity with their native village by opposition to other villages. A village's traditional rivals are usually those with which it has the most frequent contact. I was almost invariably warned by villagers that the inhabitants of the neighbouring village were a treacherous and savage lot. There are many tales of hostility between neighbouring villages, especially over the celebration of the annual festa, which I dare say have lost nothing in retelling. I was told a number of stories of how youths stampeded goats through their rivals' festa processions, and of expeditions which stole fireworks, attacked street decorations and performed other daring escapades. Although most of these adventures are said to have taken place many years ago, they are no more unusual than some of the incidents that I witnessed.

If the intense inter-village rivalry of former times has abated somewhat, it is probably because increased education and contact outside the villages have helped to break down ignorance and isolation. But this rivalry still lies dormant, and may flare up at the slightest provocation from a traditional rival; I have seen a number of fights over trivial incidents during festas and football matches. The number of police at village feasts and the quantity and density of the barbed-wire entanglements at the Schreiber

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club and a sports club. In Farrug, for instance, there are two band clubs – one of which is dedicated to St. Martin, the other to St. Roque – a football club and an active Labour Party committee; while Kortin has a band club, a social club, a Labour club, a football club and a troop of Boy Scouts. The term secular, used in this context, requires a few words of qualification. Although clubs and associations which I have called secular do not form part of the Church, this does not necessarily mean that they are opposed to it, or are cut off from it. Quite the contrary. Almost every club has a chaplain who serves as a link between it and the parish priest. Most clubs take part in certain religious functions, especially during the week preceding Easter. Moreover, many of the clubs have dedicated themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by means of special religious ceremonies. Often this dedication is renewed annually. Only the clubs of the Malta Labour Party do not have any linkage with the Church.

The band clubs are the most important secular societies. They are formally constituted associations with elected committees, premises of their own and a large body of dues-paying members drawn from all occupational and social classes. The first band clubs were established shortly after the middle of the last century in order to organize the external celebrations and provide music for the annual festas of village patron saints. The clubs multiplied rapidly, and soon became civic and social centres. They have broadened their scope to include dramatic groups, reading rooms and places where members can gamble out of sight of the watchful eyes of the law. Most clubs have large concert halls that can be used for wedding receptions. Today, each club usually has a well-stocked bar, a television set and a billiards table.

But a band club is more than just a social centre. As it usually plays an important part in organizing the external celebration of the annual festa, the men who run the club make decisions which affect all the inhabitants. Furthermore, the club often represents the community to the outside world. Not only is the club's brass band considered as the village's band when it plays at other festas, but the club also provides a welcome to important visitors from outside. Thus when the Governor or the Archbishop makes an official visit, he normally calls on the band clubs, where he is given a reception on behalf of the entire village.

565 The landed classes in Malta and particularly the nobility have never taken any considerable part in the communal life of the villages in which they maintain their country seats and draw rents from the lands which they own. They have always [793] been more urban than rural and more European than Maltese. A squirearchy on the English pattern has been lacking, and the functions which, in the English village, fell to the squire have, in Malta, come within the wide range of activities of the Parish Priest.

621 Apart from the clergy[10] and the gentry, the greater part 795 of the population of the traditional village in Malta was made 565 up of the peasantry deriving their livelihood directly or indirectly from the land or in some cases the sea. Within this section of the community homogeneity was the keynote. There was one Church. All the populace were Church members and attended the same services at the same times each day of every [203] week. The Church could therefore be the centre of diffusion of news to the villagers - both relating to farming and to general affairs in and out of the village.

Within the village the peasant and his family, patriarchal, 621 patrilineal and patrilocal, worked the few tmien of land held 565 on rent or lease: rarely was much of it owned by the cultivator. 241 The work of the farm and of the household went on as a single 423 unit (Section 2). The two were often located within the same [611] cluster of buildings (Case VI, v. Plan). Clearly some farmers [591] were richer than others, some had more land, some more animals, but accepted stratification within the village went no further than this: there was no middle class between priest and farmer.

628 For the peasant, the bounds of his regular experience 197 were the limits of the village. Contact between villages, even where close together, was slight and invariably less than that between the individual village and Valletta. Evidence of this is found in the dialect differences between villages but equally illuminating is the fact that the basic dialect distinction that can be made is that between the Urban area, with its Italianized vocabulary and intonation, and the rural parts of the Islands with their characteristically broader vowels, harsher gutterals and fewer European words and idioms (R/Aquilina, J). Language is but one aspect of rural culture in the Maltese Islands which reveals the essential independence of the village within the traditional rural scene. Village patriotism is expressed in inter-Parish 628 rivalry and in a variety of regional reputations, proverbs, 186 and local lore. Thus the shrewdness of the inhabitants of [794] Rabat is revealed by the saying that "A man from Rabat is worth two Jews"[12]. The men of Żebbuġ (Malta) are acknowledged to be merchants par excellence however, while those of Qormi

628 are alleged heavy drinkers[12]. The notion held in Gozo that a
186 man of Nadur claims to be more Maltese than Gozitan is held to point to the settlement of that village from Malta at some comparatively recent date[13].

621 Whatever the differences of size, settlement, economic
793 structure or tradition the functional basis of the Maltese
795 village remains pivoted on the Church and the Parish Priest, and a detailed discussion of the present scene becomes largely an attempt to assess the part now played vis-à-vis the Church by the new features and modifications of the old landscape in the present.

175 Here we may consider the history and growth of a young
361 Maltese village, MGARR, to show how this growing settlement has acquired the essential features common to rural society throughout the Islands (Map 5).

Until the nineteenth century, Malta north of the Victoria Lines had remained without any large settlements, partly on account of the vulnerability of the area to attack from the sea. This is not to say that there was no human activity in the area before 1800 for there is evidence of a small church
[172] in what is now Mġarr as far back as 1500[14]. Evidence, too, of life in other eras is provided by the temple of Bu Hagrat (2,000 B.C.) and the remains of a Roman house near the village.

175 However, in the early part of the nineteenth century,
361 farmers from Mosta began to cultivate the land in what is now
793 the Parish of Mġarr. The account, of the history of one of
795 the families concerned in this settlement, given by Mitchell (B/525), is typical. The numbers involved in the general movement increased as the century advanced until, in 1898, an independent Parish was established. Before 1898, spiritual needs of the farmers were catered for by visiting priests from Żebbuġ, Balzan, Mdina and Mosta itself and the tiny Church of St. Mary was used throughout this period and until 1918. Earlier in the nineteenth century the colonization of Mġarr had been a 'week-day' venture with most farmers returning to their families and homes in Mosta for the week-end and the Sunday Mass. The visiting priests celebrated Sunday morning Mass for those farmers who began to settle in the area per-
175 manently. With the granting of parochial status in 1898, a
346 full-time Parish Priest was appointed who came from Mosta and
[793] settled in the growing village. The first concern was for a new Church and work was begun in 1912, although the popula-
[463] tion of the village at this time was only 1,067 (B/167-1911). Significantly, both the master mason and the architect concerned were Mosta men. Building went ahead slowly on the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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Str. Reale, from Fort St. Elmo to Porta Reale, is aglow with the red and white colours of Malta and knights' flags; and at night is ablaze with thousands of variegated lights.

St. George's Square—opposite the Governor's Palace—is ornamented with splendid clusters of flags, pennons, gonfalons, shields, battle axes, spears, captured cannons and some entire suits of armour, kindly lent from the Palace collection. These suits create great interest, being the original property of the knights, some of the pieces bearing the evidence of shots and sabre cuts.

From the various stands, selected national bands fill the city with sweet music, and in the evening elaborate fire-works illustrate the figures and deeds of the knights.

In connection with this feast, horse

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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The square is most tastefully got up with splendid trophies of arms and red and white flags. From each of the trophies broad red and white sashes are seen hanging, on which the names of those who distinguished themselves by some brave and noble deed in the memorable siege, are written in gold letters. 527 186

The decorations of the column of Victory, in the middle of the square, are simply magnificent. This column is surrounded by four figures, representing 4 Grand Masters in full armour, one of these is the immortal LA VALETTE, who at the head of his knights, and supported by the population of Malta—men, women, and children—succeeded in hurling back, discomfited and disgraced, the Moslem, that would from Malta have sallied forth to the conquest of Europe. 527 186 211

During the day the bands, playing 527 533

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

184 memoration of the Victory won by the
527 Maltese in the great siege of 1565,
533 instead of coming to take part in the amusements held in Valletta and in the other towns, meet in groups on the terraces, or flat tops of their houses, and keep singing merrily till very late at night.

ANOTHER NATIONAL FEAST

527 The celebration of the glorious vic-
•186 tory won by the Maltese over the Turks in 1565 has been of good use to the Maltese, It has enabled them to comprehend more keenly the historic value of this Island.

[175 In fact, some two years ago another
178] national commemoration has originated at Città Vecchia, on the 3rd or 4th Sunday of September, to celebrate the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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liberation of the Maltese from the yoke of the Saracens by Count Roger of Normandy in the year 1090.

A liberal programme is now annually arranged by the Committee embracing every kind of attraction at Notabile.

PILGRIMAGES TO MELLEHA (*)

On the last two Sundays of September, every year, the roads leading to Melleha are alive with merry parties, especially country people, on their way to that village, in order to visit the

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(*) Melleha is a village some 10½ miles distant from Valletta, and about an hour's ride from St. Paul's Bay. It is renowned for the very old, perhaps the oldest, Sanctuary in the world, dedicated to the B. Virgin. This Sanctuary was founded by St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, while he was in Malta (58 A. D.) for the convenience of the faithful who lived in those neighbourhoods. Over the small altar is a picture of St. Mary, covering another old drawing of the same, executed by St. Luke.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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As regards the ecclesiastical buildings, it is permissible to regret the disappearance of all but one or two—the most notable survivor is Zejtun's "Old Parish Church" of S. Gregory—of the modest mediæval village churches, swept away to make room for the spacious, florid Baroque shrines that now raise their towers and domes high above the flat roofs of the casals. But we stand amazed at the architectural effort and achievement of the Knights in Malta in the days of their Order's greatness. Justly could they have said with Wren, "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*"

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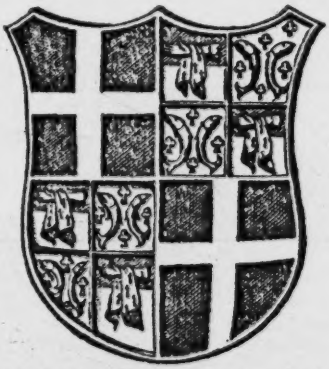

Arms of G. M. de L'Isle Adam above the Burial-place of his Entrails in Ta Ġiesu Church, Rabat

[PP. 57-64 not processed. Plates facing PP. 64 and 65 have been processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

hors-d'œuvres": of the rich mass of material available on the subject, which is all that the modest authoress allows herself to claim for her work.

113 Equally indispensable for the effect on Valetta, and Malta generally, of the Second World War is the admirably produced *Report to accompany the Outline Plan for the Region of Valletta and the Three Cities*, prepared for the Government of Malta by Austen St B. Harrison and R. Pearce Hubbard and published by that Government in 1945. Useful also is Hugh Braun's *Works of Art in Malta: Losses and Survivals in the War*, published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1946. The architecture of Malta during the period of the Order is fully dealt with in Dr Quentin Hughes's workmanlike study *The Building of Malta, 1530–1795*, published in 1956 by Tiranti.

• 186

Arms of the Anglo-Bavarian League

[pp. 69–109 of text not processed. Plates facing pp. 80, 81, 96, 97, 104 and 105 have been processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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MAIN GATE INTO MDINA, WITH ARMS OF GRAND MASTER MANOEL DE VILHENA
[See p. 89.]

INSIDE OF SAME, WITH ARMS OF INGUANEZ FAMILY
[See p. 92.]

THE LATE BARONESS INGUANEZ ALIGHTING FROM HER OLD FAMILY CALÈCHE, MDINA

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493
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[facing P. 104, (A)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

ears, a share of their own cosmopolitan culture, of their own standards of civilized life and manners.

They also, it would appear, taught the Maltese how to cook if the origin of some of the more savoury Maltese dishes—*imbuljuta* and *zalzett*, *pastizzi* and *kuskus*, has been correctly ascribed to the kitchens of the Grand Masters' palaces and Auberges of the Knights. One island speciality has even made its way into the *haute cuisine* of Europe as the perfect accompaniment of boiled turbot and similar fish. It is *Sauce Maltaise*—a *Hollandaise* encarnadined and additionally flavoured with the juice and finely shredded peel of the blood-orange, which can be of a deeper red in Malta than anywhere else in the world.

Arms of the Order of S. John

[pp. 111–119 of Text have not been processed. Plates facing p. 112, and 113 have been processed].

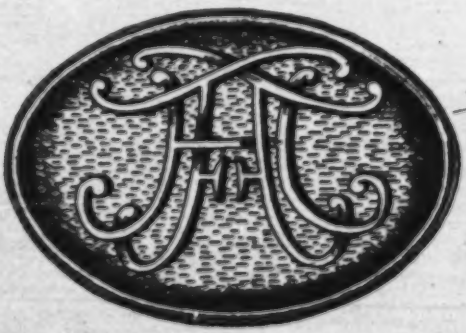
9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

would have survived Tommasi as well. He died at Montpellier, a destitute and lonely exile, in May 1805, six months after the Emperor Napoleon had confirmed the annual pension of 300,000 francs which General Bonaparte had undertaken to pay him in 1798 by the Convention of the capitulation of Valetta.

Henry Harland closes one of his short stories with the reflection that while all good things come to him who waits, they sometimes come to him too late, and sometimes may come too early. True, no doubt; but the former is probably the commoner misfortune. At all events, the change in his luck came too late for poor Hompesch. When he died there was no money for the doctors or for the cost of the funeral, and he was buried by the Confraternity of the Blue Penitents of Montpellier under the altar of their chapel, in a plain unpainted coffin of soft wood. No inscription marked his obscure resting-place.[1]

He was spared the irony that it should bear his family's haughty motto: "*Frangor nec flector*—I may be broken, but I cannot be bent."

[1] *Cf.* De Villeneuve-Bargemont, *Monuments des Grands-Maîtres de l'Ordre de St Jean* (Paris, 1829, vol. ii, p. 322). One of Hompesch's personal standards is preserved in the Armoury of the Tower of London. Another is at St John's Gate.



Monogram of G. M. Hompesch
From the manuscript of his Statutes (now the Governor's Office) in the Palace.

[pp. 121-141 of text have not been processed. plates facing pp. 128, and 129 have been processed].

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

masons have found it possible to comply with a suggestion of mine that the two originals should be pieced together and replaced, for the sake of continuity, in their original position.

Also, as regards the handsome carved stone balcony, crumbling fragments of the original balcony were found in sufficient quantity to make it possible for the entire design to be reconstituted.

The Bondi Palace, thus saved from disappearance, is destined to be the Museum of Gozo.

The British Royal Arms: 1801–16
From the early numbers of "The Malta Government Gazette"

[pp. 143-196 of text not processed. Plates facing pp. 144, 145, 160, 161, 192 and 193 have been processed].

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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more outstanding examples, in Bulletin No. 1 of the Malta Institute of Historical Research by Sir Hannibal Scicluna, whose name is almost synonymous with that of the Library he so long and enthusiastically directed. Other "classifications" comprise the minutes of the Council of the Order,

Arms of Devalbelle Latour

the Council of State, Chapter-General and the Congregation of War, the Chancery registers, the records of the Order's Commanderies abroad, ecclesiastical affairs, the Inquisition, the administration of the Sacred Infirmary and of the Navy, the affairs of the several Langues. They include, in short, the multifarious matters with which a body that was not only a quasi-military, quasi-religious, militant and Hospitaller organization with property in every country in Christendom, but also the ruler of islands set in the midst of all the cross-currents of Europe, could be expected to be concerned. One interesting "classification" also includes Papal Bulls concerning two other Crusading Orders—the Teutonic Knights, who still exist, and the Knights Templar, whose dramatic

[pp. 198-201 of text not processed.]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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is no sacrifice they will not gladly make for the greater dignity and beauty of their churches. Take, for example, the case of Mġarr—one of the smallest and poorest of the parishes of Malta and the one most cherished by that great seaman and lover of Malta, the late Admiral Sir W. W. Fisher. Here between the two wars the inhabitants, nearly all hard-working peasants, under the enthusiastic leadership of their parish priest, Father (later Monsignor) Edgar Salomone, built a great new church by their own efforts, bringing their weekly contributions to the building fund in eggs and fowls and vegetables and whatever else they produce.

At street corners statues of saints, sometimes also of souls enveloped in a purgatorial blaze, afford them ever-present reminders, encouraging or minatory as the case may be, of the next world; in this one they love the great ecclesiastical ceremonies, particularly the processions which are one of the features of Maltese life. These assume on Good Friday something of the character of a Passion Play, with members of lay confraternities staggering along Merchants' Street in Valetta beneath the weight of life-size groups of the Passion carved with gruesome realism. I have also seen these processions in Palermo, where I have been shocked at the flippancy and irreverence not so much of the onlookers as of the actual participants. The Maltese play their parts in these functions with profound and solemn devoutness. Indeed, some of them may be bearing their burden, whatever it is, in fulfilment of a self-imposed penance, concealing their features behind a hood with eye-holes that covers the head.

But on the annual *festa*, the local saint's day, of their village they give themselves up wholeheartedly to rejoicings, which are definitely on the noisy side. For they are punctuated by the explosions of crackers, maroons and every procurable form of noise-producing apparatus, and they are illuminated by ingenious, locally made fireworks. On these days the casals are a brave sight as they fly from the top of every house of any importance the flag of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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the Grand Master who was their founder or their patron, gay with the rich heraldry and colouring of the last phase of the age of chivalry. We have seen in Chapter XII that Grand Master Ferdinand von Hompesch, inglorious but Maltese-speaking and on excellent terms with the Maltese country-folk, gave one of his names and his special patronage to no fewer than three of the casals. Zabbar's subsidiary name was Città Hompesch, that of Siġġiewi Città Ferdinando, that of Zejtun Città Beland, the maiden name (Bylandt) of Hompesch's mother. Similarly, Curmi was known alternatively as Città Pinto, Zebbuġ as Città Rohan. In the cases of Senglea and Pawla the Grand Masters de la Sengle and de Paule were actually the founders.

It affords a pleasant and richly coloured glimpse into a romantic past, and happy evidence of the attachment of the Maltese to their unique historical traditions, to see the great square armorial flags of these Grand Masters in their proper tinctures waving on gala days over their casals.

July, August and September, the hottest months of the year, are Malta's *festa* season *par excellence*. At that period, and especially in August, there is an absolute orgy of what irreverent young officers are apt to call "festering," and the two islands resound from end to end with the detonations of petards and bombs. At night the parish church of whichever casal is celebrating its patronal feast is prettily illuminated, while elaborate set-pieces are displayed regardless of expense and other fireworks of a less stationary nature accomplish, or fail to accomplish, their destined trajectory. The amount spent annually by the population on fireworks and mere noise-making contrivances is positively staggering.

The first village *festa* I attended—I had arrived in Malta in the month of August—was in one of the smaller, more remote and more rustic casals. The church bells were clanging with no attempt at rhythm; rockets and Roman candles were going off in rapid succession in all directions; Catharine-wheels were rotating around one; the noise was

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Classical authors as well as travellers of the Renaissance and later ages have praised Malta's fertility, the quality of its corn, its fruit, its linen and its cotton,[1] the sweet scent of its roses,[2] the delicate aroma of the wild thyme that flavours its honey. Cicero, in fact, called Malta a land of honey and roses, and it was being described in similar terms nearly two thousand years later. "The fruits are of exquisite flavour," wrote Dr Meryon, Lady Hester Stanhope's sorely tried physician, companion and biographer. "Flowers are very fine, and I could not help fancying the roses more fragrant than in my own country. Malta honey is highly esteemed." Elsewhere the Doctor remarks that "no people are more attached to their country than the Maltese to their barren rock"; and it is natural enough that the Maltese of to-day should like to refer to their island as "the flower of the world."

This phrase, if held to refer solely to scenery and vegetation, might appear to some to verge on the excessive. If it be taken to apply to the many-sidelines of Malta's interest and amenities it does not lack justification.

[1] During the era of sailing-ships Malta, and especially the casal of Zebbuġ, produced a heavy cotton sail-cloth which earned a wide reputation and was exported all over Europe.

[2] The name Attard, the charming old casal half-way between Hamrun and Mdina, means "the village of roses."

Arms of G. M. Manoel de Vilhena

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

436 Malta in the reigns of all the British sovereigns who have ruled in Malta from George IV to George V inclusive.

•186 Let this chapter end with another survival, perhaps the most ubiquitous of all, although its origin antedates the 173 arrival of the Knights by more than four hundred years. 178 It is the red-and-white Maltese flag which is flown throughout the islands side by side with the Union Jack. Long-established tradition has it that the red and white were the colours of the Norman House of Hauteville, and that the flag and the corresponding arms are one of the legacies of Roger de Hauteville, Count of Sicily, Lord of Malta, to this smallest of his dominions. When, between the World Wars, it was suggested to Malta by the English College of Arms that the Colony should regularize its arms by formally recording them at the College, Malta replied that it had borne those arms for nearly three centuries before the foundation of the College by Richard III.

The position was ultimately adjusted with the College in 1943, when Malta's coat-of-arms received the honourable augmentation of the George Cross.

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Malta Government Hall-marks for Gold and Silver

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Goz

Corniche from heights as inaccessible as nature and man's ingenuity could make them. When the marauders from North Africa ceased to be a menace, the citadel was partly evacuated for the lower town, but happily was never abandoned completely. Even now it contains the cathedral of the diocese and the Law Court and Public Registry, formerly the residence of the Governors of Gozo; and, although many of its ancient houses are in ruins, a few are still inhabited.

One interesting little lane with façades of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was restored by the Government before the outbreak of the Second World War, as has been the handsome Renaissance building facing the entrance to the citadel latterly known as the Bondi Palace, as related at the end of Chapter XIII. One of the houses in the lane at one time belonged, as an inscription testifies, to the soldier Bernard, "*miles Bernardus*," who was killed at the capture of the citadel by the Turks under Sinan Pasha in 1551. When he saw that the fortress could hold out no longer this dauntless man took the lives of his wife and two daughters with his own hand to save them from being sold into captivity, and then fell, fighting to the end. The walls and fortifications of the citadel are happily well preserved.

Gozo was Ogygia or Gaulos to the Greeks, *gaulos* (γαῦλος) being the word the Greeks had for the round merchant-boats of their rivals, the Phœnicians. From Gaulos it became Gaulum to the Romans, then appears on Idrisi's map of 1154 as Ghudash, and in modern Maltese is known as Ghawdex (pronounced Audesh), its Bishop signing as *Episcopus Gaudisiensis*. The shortest ferry-crossing between the two islands is only four miles, yet many Gozitans have never been to Malta while the overwhelming majority of Maltese have never been to Gozo.

The Gozitans are a frugal, thrifty, reserved, at times somewhat (yet not unpleasantly) dour people, who are regarded in Malta in much the same way as the Scots are

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Gozo

sometimes regarded in England—in other words, as hard-headed folk whom nothing will keep out of the best jobs. It is certainly true to say that, loth as they may be to leave their own little island, when they do it is definitely to better themselves. They make excellent colonists in Australia and elsewhere in the New World, while those who emigrate no farther than Malta frequently attain distinction. The story is told of a function in S. John's Co-Cathedral in Valetta at a time, not so many years ago, when the Gozitans who were leading personages in Church and State included the Archbishop of Malta, Mgr Pace.

"Well," said a Maltese worshipper, after watching the entry into the church of the procession of Archbishop and Canons and other dignitaries, mostly (or so it seemed to him) natives of the junior island, "I suppose we ought to be thankful that the sacristan is still a Maltese."

Byron may have had something similar in mind when he bracketed Malta with Gozo as

> Calypso's isles,
> The sister tenants of the middle deep,

instead of describing them as mother and daughter.

There is much to see in this small island of 27 square miles and as many thousand inhabitants besides natural scenery and the monuments alluded to above. Let me instance some characteristic features of various widely different epochs of Gozo's long history. First must come the twin Stone Age temples of Ggantija, through their cyclopean construction—one block has the formidable dimensions of 12½ by 17½ feet—the most stupendous work of Neolithic man in the Maltese archipelago. Farther excavation by the Malta Museum is planned on and around their site when funds permit, and more wonders may yet come to light. Meanwhile the visitor may enjoy from one of the most impressive architectural survivals of remote antiquity a comprehensive view of Gozo and of the north-western end of Malta, with

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Gozo

342 connexion with the invasion of Sicily and destined to be
648 used only once.[1]

Lastly, to prove that Gozo lives not only in the past, let
346 me mention the pilgrimage church of Ta Pinu, a lofty
341 basilica in the beautiful white limestone of the island completed as recently as 1931. This shrine is impressive as an example of modern Romanesque no less than as proof of the active piety of a laborious and God-fearing people.

[1] A public-spirited citizen of Xewkija, Mr L. Zammit Haber, has piously preserved all the carved escutcheons, inscriptions and balcony stones of the Torri Gourgion.

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Arms of Gozo

[PP. 228 – 232 have not been Processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

"The Bulwark of the Faith" had become the bulwark of freedom in the Middle Sea. Justly had it merited its latest title of "Malta, George Cross."

The tenacity of the Maltese during their long ordeal recalls to me the epitaph written by Tymnes, a Greek poet of the second century B.C., on a Maltese dog:

> He came from Malta; and Eumelus says
> He had no better dog in all his days.
> We called him Bull.

Such might have been Great Britain's tribute after the second Siege of Malta to her watchdog-island in the Mediterranean.

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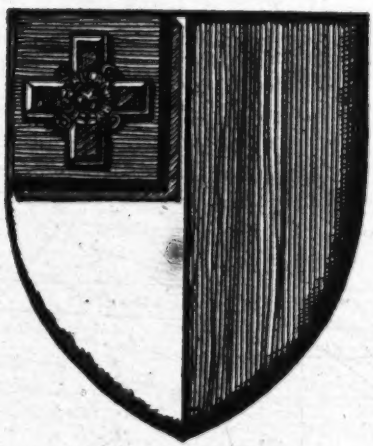

Arms of Malta, George Cross

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

• 186

ARMS AND INSCRIPTION ABOVE THE MAIN GUARD, VALETTA
[See p. 119.]

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

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To the Governor
Malta.

To know her brave people
I award the George Cross to the
Island Fortress of Malta to bear
witness to a heroism and devotion
that will long be famous in history.

George R.I.

April 15th 1942.

KING GEORGE VI'S LETTER AWARDING THE GEORGE CROSS
[See p. 231]

[Facing P. 241]